

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 6181

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to county canvassing board membership.

Brief Description: Providing an employee of the county legislative authority may be appointed to the county canvassing board.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators McDermott, Oemig, Fairley and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government & Tribal Affairs: 2/22/08, 2/26/08 [DP].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows the chair of a county legislative body in a county with a population over one million to designate an employee of the legislative body to serve on the county canvassing board.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 5 members: Representatives Hunt, Chair; Appleton, Vice Chair; Liias, Miloscia and Ormsby.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 2 members: Representatives Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Kretz.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

A county canvassing board (board) is comprised of three members: the county auditor, the county prosecuting attorney, and the chair of the county legislative body. The board determines the validity of provisional, questionable, and challenged ballots and certifies official election returns. If a member of the board is not available to carry out his or her duties, he or she may designate an individual to act in their respective place. The county

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auditor may designate a deputy auditor, the county prosecutor may designate a deputy prosecutor, and the chair of the county legislative body may designate another member of the county legislative body. Designations may be made on an election-by-election basis or on a permanent basis until revoked by the designating authority.

State law requires that any person having a responsibility to administer or conduct elections must receive training on their responsibilities and duties. This training requirement applies to county canvassing board members.

Summary of Bill:

In counties with a population over one million people, the chair of a county legislative body may designate an employee to serve on the county canvassing board in the event the chair is not available. An "employee of the legislative body" is an individual who reports directly to the chair and serves as chief of staff, legal counsel, clerk of the council, or policy staff director. Any designee assigned to the county canvassing board must complete the same training in the conduct of elections as required for county canvassing board members.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) King County's budget development happens at the same time as canvassing for the general election. The bill has been narrowed to include just King County and it identifies a select few employees who may serve on the board. It also adds language to make sure these employees get the same training as the other board members. Of the employees who may be considered, four are attorneys and one has a masters degree. They are all highly qualified individuals who would serve in lieu of the chair.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator McDermott, prime sponsor; and Chuck Williams, King County.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.